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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 001397

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SUBJECT: SOMALILAND FOREIGN MINISTER REVIEWS COOPERATION
WITH ETHIOPIA AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 1308

[B](#). ADDIS ABABA 420

[C](#). ADDIS ABABA 68

[D](#). ADDIS ABABA 60

Classified By: ERIC WONG, DEPUTY POL-ECON COUNSELOR. REASON: 1.4 (D).

[1](#). (S/NF) SUMMARY. On May 4, Somaliland Foreign Minister Abdillahi M. Duale updated Ambassador and poloff on his recent visit to Europe to promote Somaliland's external relations with potential donors, and ongoing consultations with Ethiopia on cross-border counter-terrorism cooperation. FM Duale asserted that Sweden would relate to Somaliland as "a self-governing state" for foreign assistance activities, and appealed for the USG and other donors to help Somaliland sustain its democratization and economic development. Somaliland sought support for a visit by an AU political mission, and objected to a recent EU report on Somalia. Duale requested USG assistance in having international fora affirm that the "de facto status" of Somaliland should be addressed by dialogue; and that the peace, security, and tranquillity of Somaliland should be preserved. On bilateral issues with the U.S., Duale said President Kahin would comply with a USG request to release a prisoner recently convicted of terrorism (ref C), and appealed for USG technical assistance to help Somaliland's Ministry of Religious Affairs to register mosques. Noting that "the security of Ethiopia is our security," Duale highlighted counter-terrorism cooperation with Ethiopia at the ministerial and local levels, and condemned the April 24 Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) attack on a Chinese oil facility near Ethiopia's border with Somaliland (ref A). He concluded by observing that relations with Djibouti remained strained, and by questioning the political legitimacy of Puntland. END SUMMARY.

LOBBYING EUROPE FOR RECOGNITION

[2](#). (SBU) Reporting on recent consultations in Europe, Duale said he had met with authorities in Denmark, Germany, and the UK, and that Sweden had now decided it would relate to Somaliland as "a self-governing state," at least in terms of development and democratization activities. Duale appealed for the USG and other donors to help Somaliland sustain its

democratization and economic development. An "infant democracy" whose parliament was controlled by the opposition by a nine-vote margin, Somaliland could be an effective partner in promoting security, development, and transparency for the region, Duale said. In June, a German firm would begin operations to produce cement, gypsum, and coal, which was expected to boost job creation. Somaliland was a constitutional state devoted to secularism; Duale said BBC Somali Service had misquoted him saying Somaliland was led by an "infidel" administration, a mistake corrected in subsequent broadcasts on Hargeisa television.

13. (C) Of concern to Somaliland, however, was the last European Union report on Somalia, which insinuated that Somaliland destabilized Djibouti, Duale said. Duale said he had protested to the EU about the characterization of Somaliland being synonymous with the Issak clan.

14. (C) Noting that the USG was chairing the UN Security Council in May, Duale appealed for USG support to have international fora (including the AU, EU, IGAD, UN, and the International Contact Group on Somalia) affirm that:
-- the peace, security, and tranquillity of Somaliland should be preserved; and that
-- the "de facto status" of Somaliland should be addressed by dialogue.
According to Duale, Ethiopian State Minister of Foreign Affairs Tekeda supported both points, and bilateral consultations between Duale and Tekeda would continue through the following week.

SOMALILAND WILL RELEASE DETAINEE TO USG

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15. (S/NF) Regarding a detained Somalilander whom Somaliland President Kahin had pledged to release at the request of the USG (ref C), FM Duale reiterated Somaliland's commitment to releasing him, saying "a promise is a promise." Somaliland would comply with the USG's request, despite the detainee's recent conviction "among other terrorists," and some parliamentarians' opposition to his release. President Kahin had pushed the case "to the limit," Duale said, having convened Supreme Court justices to hear the case in Berbera (as the jail in the capital, Hargeisa, was under renovation), in order to render the judicial process complete. Having convicted him, Somaliland could now exfiltrate him without public attention. The prisoner's release, at the request of the USG, was "a foregone conclusion;" only the "technical issue of removing him" from Somaliland remained, Duale said. Ambassador underscored the priority of securing the individual's release.

16. (C) Citing examples of support for counter-terrorism, Duale said Somaliland welcomed its "strategic friendship" with the USG. Ambassador noted shared concerns about security and stability, and urged Somaliland authorities to share information on suspected terrorists that may be transiting Somaliland. Duale requested USG assistance with the following:
-- Capacity-building for Somaliland's Ministry of Religious Affairs was a priority, as the government sought to emulate Turkey and register mosques, particularly those receiving foreign support that were "installed without accountability."
-- USG advocacy could help convince the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) to send a mission to Somaliland.

COOPERATION WITH ETHIOPIA, BUT NOT PUNTLAND OR DJIBOUTI

17. (C) Somaliland had recently decided to replace its ambassador to Ethiopia, due to Ethiopia's strategic

importance, Duale said. Noting that "the security of Ethiopia is our security," FM Duale underscored Somaliland-Ethiopia cooperation on border security and counter-terrorism:

-- Somaliland had previously arrested Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) insurgents "red-handed" in a safe house, and had established a bilateral mechanism with Ethiopia for the exchange of information. Somaliland had expressed condolences for the "deplorable" April 24 ONLF attack on a Chinese oil facility in Ethiopia's Somali Region (ref A).

-- For its own national security as well as that of the region, Somaliland had established a commission to study the "exodus" of individuals fleeing through Hargeisa from (southern) Somalia. Many were "common people" accompanied by family members, Duale said, noting that the magnitude of the exodus had driven up the cost of housing, schools, and commodities in Hargeisa.

-- At the national level, Somaliland and the GOE had established an interministerial committee to regularly discuss security issues; links would also be established between local Hargeisa authorities and local administrators in Dire Dawa and Ethiopia's Somali Region. Joint GOE-Somaliland delegations had met with Somali Region officials to discuss inter-tribal fighting in the Region, Duale said, where some Somaliland-registered vehicles had been attacked.

¶8. (C) In contrast, Somaliland had serious problems with Djibouti and Puntland, Duale said. Recognition of Puntland would set a poor precedent for the African Union and encourage separatist movements by other ethnic groups, Duale claimed, such as in Rwanda. "Puntland is a gimmick: one tribe who lives on both sides of the border," Duale said. Duale claimed that the GOE was aware that Bosasso authorities (i.e., in Puntland) collected a levy on livestock that benefited the ONLF. Asserting that Puntland was a creation of Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) President

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Abdullahi Yusuf, Duale said Somaliland would "hold him accountable" for all these "provocations."

¶9. (C) Duale noted strained relations with Djibouti's President Guelleh, perhaps motivated by fear that Berbera port operations would undercut Djibouti's. Somaliland believed ports in the region could complement each other, and had discussed the viability of a "Berbera corridor" with the EU, Duale said.

¶10. (C) COMMENT. While FM Duale objects to the EU's characterization of Somaliland as a majority Issak region, he highlights the ethnic basis of Puntland's claim to sovereignty. Somaliland's close cooperation with Ethiopia, in contrast to its strained relations with Puntland and with the TFG in the south, highlights Ethiopia's central political role in the region, as Ethiopia maintains close relations with all three estranged Somali entities. The recent ONLF attack on a Chinese facility near Ethiopia's border with Somaliland (ref A) underscores the strategic importance of Somaliland's security linkages with Ethiopia and the value of enhancing counter-terrorism cooperation with Somaliland authorities. END COMMENT.
YAMAMOTO